

Bridges of hope: The stories of those who have gone through the alternative learning

Tiffany Nadine S. Lim¹, Clarisse Mae L. Monte de Ramos², Aljun C. Marikit³, Patricia Mae Gabaca⁴,
and Johnny J. Yao, Jr⁵

Date Received: 12th of October, 2017

Date Accepted: 10th of December, 2017

ABSTRACT

This study explores the stories of students who had stopped formal schooling and experienced being in the Alternative Learning System (ALS), which is another form of education that is not commonly taken, for those who want to get back into the educational system. Using Narrative Inquiry, specifically Labov and Waletzky's six-part narrative analysis for the construction (The Abstract, Orientation, Complicating Action, Evaluation, Resolution, and Coda), seven (7) informants were interviewed about their stories and experiences throughout the entirety of their academic pursuit with ALS. Five (5) main plots emerged from the interviews, namely: (a) "The Wanderer's Quandary"; (b) "The Fork at the End of the Road"; (c) "The Path Less Traveled"; (d) "The Unceasing River"; and (e) "The Open Field." Each main plot has corresponding subplots for each informant. The findings revealed that the experience of being an ALS student is not easy. Being in a different form of education, different from what society usually pursues, comes stigma. Strong will and perseverance had lead these people to go through with ALS. It became their bridge of hope to a second chance towards their pursuit through education.

Keywords: alternative education, informal education, Labov and Waletzky, narrative inquiry, non-formal education school dropouts, parallel education

I. INTRODUCTION

One factor that can bring change into the life of an individual is education. Unfortunately, not all are given the opportunity to follow or continue with formal education due to wide variation of circumstances, such as those who have insufficient income, early marriage, lack of interest in attending school (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2015). Child labor, indigenous people and older-aged children, especially those who are at least two years above the official age for a grade, are more likely to drop out of school (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2015). The Alternative Learning System (ALS) is a parallel learning system that provides an option for

those who do not have or cannot access formal education (Department of Education [DepEd], 2017). Taking up this form of education can be challenging to some; those who want to continue their education but are older than a certain grade's age group or those who have to stop schooling possibly due to financial difficulty had to go through the experience of being at a different age and status compared to peers. It could be a burden for some, knowing that the experience of going through ALS is different from what the general public is doing, which is formal education. In addition to this, since ALS is a parallel form of education, not commonly taken by the public, there is stigma and discrimination towards ALS students and how they

1. ORCID Number: 0000-0002-1847-4904, T. N. S. Lim is with the College of Nursing, Velez College, Ramos Street, Cebu City, 6000, Philippines (e-mail: tlim97@yahoo.com).

2. ORCID Number: 0000-0002-6532-0633, C. M. L. Monte de Ramos is with the College of Nursing, Velez College, Ramos street, Cebu City, 6000, Philippines (e-mail: mclarissemae@gmail.com).

3. ORCID Number: 0000-0002-7925-8658, A. C. Marikit is with the College of Nursing, Velez College, Ramos Street, Cebu City, 6000, Philippines (e-mail: aljunmarikit@gmail.com).

4. ORCID Number: 0000-0002-2092-1646, P. M. Gabaca is with the College of Nursing, Velez College, Ramos Street, Cebu City, 6000, Philippines (email: Patgabaca@gmail.com).

5. ORCID Number: 0000-0002-0566-7747, J. J. Yao, Jr. is with the College of Nursing, Velez College, Ramos Street, Cebu City, 6000, Philippines (email: johnnyyaojr@gmail.com).

came to enroll in the program.

As of school year 2016 to 2017, DepEd had reached 2,929,456 indigenous people learners nationwide (Ballaran, 2017). To ensure that the ALS curriculum is aligned with the K to 12 Program, the DepEd, through the Bureau of Curriculum Development (BCD), launched the ALS K-12 Basic Education Curriculum. With this new curriculum, ALS learners would have quality education that would allow ALS learners to co-exist with the K to 12 program (DepEd, 2017). With the new system in place, the students that pass the Accreditation and Equivalency (A&E) exam will need to return to formal high school for two additional years before being able to enroll in college (Sanchez, n.d.).

Those in ALS see it as a tool to get back into the educational system. The students in ALS all have their own unique stories to tell. Compared to other studies that focus on the teachers of ALS or the interaction of the teachers with certain focused groups of students enrolled into the program, this study aims to explore and elaborate the importance of the stories of those who enrolled in the Alternative Learning System, focusing on certain circumstances that led them to be unsuccessful in continuing formal education, to promote awareness to the public that not all ALS students came from a negative experience, and to even promote the positive effects of the program itself.

II. BACKGROUND

There are a variety of circumstances that could lead one to suddenly stop schooling. To be dismissed from formal schooling and start over again with another form of education could be a difficult thing for a student. This other form of education being the Alternative Learning System (ALS).

It is a program of DepEd handled by the Bureau of Alternative Learning System (BALS) that provides a systematic and flexible approach to reach all types of learners outside of the formal school system. The ALS is a parallel learning system in the Philippines that provides a practical option along with the existing formal system (DepEd, 2017). According to Rousseau, in his own political novel *Emile*, the growth of the learner should be facilitated with opportunities from a nurturing environment. The ALS subscribes to this pattern of learning, as it is a more practical option for out-of-school youth and other individuals who cannot cope with formal schooling. The ALS offers basic education in a way that fits distinct needs and situations of students. The ALS program is flexible. Learning can take place anytime and anywhere, depending on the convenience and availability of the

learners (Doyle & Smith, 2007).

According to Mullen and Lambie (n.d.) from the the University of South Florida, the students enrolled in Alternative Education School (AES) usually deal with a variety of problems. These students are usually labelled as “problem students” because they show signs of delinquency, from defiant behaviors to violence and aggression. Furthermore, mental health interventions are crucial. There is a high prevalence of suicidal tendencies which is identified as an essential need for counselling services (Atilano, Desipida, Domingo, Garbin, & Omanito, 2016).

III. THE STUDY

This study aimed to explore the stories of students who had been in Alternative Learning System.

We utilized a qualitative research, specifically Narrative Inquiry. By using the six-part model, namely: The Abstract, Orientation, Complicating Action, Evaluation, Resolution, and Coda, we were able to systematically structure the informants’ stories in a way that would be easily understood. Furthermore, we used Labov and Waletzky’s analysis. In using this approach, one can link the individual meaning to cultural meaning by analyzing each element of Labov’s analysis in terms of how it both reveals and contributes to the development of a personal identity that is social rather than private (Labov & Waletzky, 1967). Specify the methodology and specific research design and tradition. Highlight the specific procedures relevant to the design.

Our research settings for our six interviews were in Barangay Talamban and one in Barangay Pit-os, done in mutually agreed upon locations by both the researchers and the informants.

We utilized snowball sampling in which we were referred to informants who in turn recruited future informants, then a purposive method of sampling, specifically maximum variation where we wanted a varied group of individuals with different age groups experiences, and the like to maximize and cultivate the variety in the study. The inclusion criteria were those who have experienced being in the Alternative Learning System in Cebu City regardless of how long they were enrolled. The exclusion criteria were those under other projects of ALS not within our scope like Muslim migrants, indigenous people, disabled people specifically those with hearing impairment where they have a different ALS program.

Seven informants were interviewed for this study, with the sample size determined through the thickness of the narrative. It is when assumptions and contexts in

which a message has been conveyed and has been deeply examined, in our informants' case, it is observed when no new information is obtained and redundancy is achieved.

After obtaining approval of our study, we partook in a self-awareness activity wherein we had to reflect on how we perceive ourselves and others, both positively and negatively. The aim of the activity was to eliminate any bias that we had previously attained of ALS students. Following the activity, we were able to conduct a mock interview with a past ALS student.

We used a semi-structured interview for the data collection with a grand tour question of "How did you get the idea of enrolling in the Alternative Learning System?", which opens the topic of the informants' process through ALS. From this opening question, we can delve deeper into the different challenges the informants' went through, before they enrolled into ALS and the experience throughout ALS in itself. An audio recorder and field notes were utilized during the interview.

Table 1
Profile of Informants

Informant	Age	Gender	School level they stopped schooling	Main reason they stopped	Education Status (present)
Cathy	35	Female	1 st year High School	Financial problem	ALS graduate
Dong	23	Male	5 th Grade	Financial problem	Ongoing; High School
Olanzapine	19	Male	3 rd year High School	Family problem	Ongoing; ALS
Doy	21	Male	3 rd year High School	Lack of interest	Ongoing; College
Magz	23	Female	5 th Grade	Lack of interest	Ongoing; ALS
Wilfredo	19	Male	2 nd year High School	Lack of interest	Ongoing; ALS
Felix	28	Male	3 rd year High School	Financial Problem	Ongoing; College

We were able to obtain approval from the Velez College Ethics Review Committee before conducting our study. To ensure protection of the rights of the informants, we provided each informant with a consent form containing full information of the study. This allowed the participants to play a collaborative role in the decision-making process regarding ongoing participation (Polit & Beck, 2006). We also gave the informants the freedom to choose their own alias for confidentiality purposes. In exchange for their participation, we provided a simple token of gratitude together with verbal expression of gratefulness to each informant. To establish credibility of the study, we spent sufficient time in the field, done persistent observation of the informants, used triangulation, utilized peer debriefing, and done member checks

to learn and reliability of information obtained over time, we conducted data triangulation to validate whether the answers provided by one informant would relate to the rest of the selected informants for the same question asked. We observed the authenticity of the data by manually transcribing the audio transcripts and verifying the meaning of vague statements with the informant. For transferability, we detailed account of field experiences, including the use of field notes.

We used Labov and Waletzky's narrative analysis in interpreting the data, since it is easier in structuring the information in a systematic way and has a flow. It was the narrative choice used to systematically report and order the past events and experiences of the informants. The purpose of using this analysis is one way to recount the past events, in which order of the narrative clauses matches the order of events as they occur (Labov & Waletzky, 1967). In using this narrative structural analysis, the design is strengthened by six structural elements which include: Abstract (introduces and summarizes the story), Orientation (character, time, place and events), Complication (critical events in the story), Evaluation (implication and meaning of the actions and events), Results (outcome of the story) and Coda (links the story in the past back to the present of the storyteller's life).

After listening to the recorded interviews, transcribing them and coming together to discuss about each informant, we were able to come up with similar experiences that formulated main stories and decided on subplots for each informant under each main story, utilizing the six-part narrative analysis: The Abstract, Orientation, Complicating Action, Evaluation, Resolution, and Coda, in forming the study.

CODA. Analysis of the data gathered from seven informants emerged one story and was titled "Bridges of Hope." It entails five main plots that narrates the lives of people who had gone through the Alternative Learning System. Each main plot has its subplots that represents the different sides of the characters seen in Table 2. The subplots are the same with the main plot but is smaller in scale and more specific.

The Wanderer's Quandary. The first story talks about the unexpected and unfortunate events that came into the lives of the informants that have brought change to their lives especially in regards to their education. As everybody differs in their own distinct way, each person handles problems and situations differently. Most of us try to escape, deny the truth or become wanderers in which we try to find solution to that situation. This story narrates about the various reasons that led the informants to stop schooling,

as verbalized by Doy:

Na- a pako sa eskwelahan mura ko'g nagkasakit-sakit adto ba. Nagpacheck-up ko sa doctor, ni-ingon siya nga 'weak imong resistensya, kinahanglan sa ka mo undang og eskwela.' Ang nagdecide ana nga mo undang ko og skwela kay ang ako'ng parents. Dili ako. [When I was still in school I was very sickly. When I got checked up by the doctor, he said 'your immune system is weak, you need to stop school for a while.' My parents agreed with the advice of the doctor. It was not my decision to stop schooling.]

Table 2
Story Titles and Subplots

Stories	The Wanderer's Quandary	The Fork at the End of the Road	The Path Less Traveled	The Unceasing River	The Open Field
Cathy	The Run Away	The Unfamiliar Road	New Track		Gold at the end of the road
Dong	The Blue Joker	The Black Ace of Spades	Ace of Diamonds	Ace of Swords	Ace of Hearts
Olanzapine	The Poor Prince	Finding his Castle	The Shining Armor		The Fighter
Doy	The Time Out	The Joust	Tip-Off	Step, Run, Leap	The Point
Magz	Happy Go Lucky	Twist of Fate	The Change	The Second Time Around	The Dreamer
Wilfredo		The Dark Path	The Awakening	The Guiding Star	Way Back Home
Felix	The Failed Achiever	The Golden Lining	The Medal of Honor	The Scholar	Lighting the Torch of Excellence

In Doy's case, his parents decided for him that he should stop schooling, for the benefit of his health, even if it was not his choice in doing so. Another informant named Magz verbalized:

Nada-ot ko sa computer. Sa una kana'ng Counter Strike. Mao to nakahibaw ako'ng papa na wala na di-ay ko'y sulod-sulod sugod gyud pagklase sa grade 5 hangtud hapit na ang graduation nagtu-o na siya na musud ko pero na-a ra di-ay ko tibu-ok adlaw sa computeran. [I'm addicted to computer games; the most famous game at that time was Counter Strike. Since I was in grade five my father didn't know that I didn't attend class anymore until it was near graduation. He thought I regularly attended class but in reality I was not, because I was at the computer café all day.]

In Magz' case, she was too preoccupied with computer games to realize the weight of the consequences in not attending school until graduation came along, and her parents found out she would not be able to proceed to the next grade in school. With or without purpose, there are various aspects that come into play for those who have suddenly or gradually stopped school.

The Fork at the end of the Road. This story talks about the sudden change that happened in the lives of the informants that has led them to come up with a realization whether to remain the same or to change their life by taking a new path using the Alternative Learning System. In the story of one of our informants, Magz, who has always been carefree, the sudden death of her father served as her turning point to change as she verbalized:

Naka-amgo nako, kailangan nako undangan ang pagcomputer, nya magtinarung nako ba. Kay kadto na-a pa sila nag expect sila na tarung kay ko, dili di-ay. Nya karon nawala na sila ma-o naningkamot ko para pod sa ilaha ba bahala og wala na sila. [It made me realize that I needed to stop playing computer games, and I needed to change for the better. When both of my parents were still alive, they expected me to be good, but I was not. And now that they are gone, I want to persevere for them even if they are no longer here.]

Another informant named Cathy talked about how she wanted to prove something to herself and to her family even through hard times, she used her current unfortunate events as her driving force to continue on and decided to pursue the education she so sought after, as she verbalized:

Mura gyud kog gipalukdo sa kalibutan. Kadaghan gud ko ganahan mu give up kay kanang bug-atan na bitaw ko. Pero makakita kos akong mga bata makahunahuna ko na dili maayu na buhaton. [It felt like I was carrying the world. There were a lot of times when I wanted to give up on life because it was already too hard for me to handle. But when I see my children, that's when I realized that I should keep moving forward.]

At some point in a persons life, there may be a fork of decisions to be made, one choice might leave one stagnant and the choice might be surprisingly different or drastic. The informants have chosen ultimately for themselves to push through continuing education through the Alternative Learning System, no matter what the future holds.

The Path Less Traveled. This story narrates the time when the informants have experienced being in the Alternative Learning System. In the case of our informants, they have decided to take the path less traveled, which was choosing to take and go through the Alternative Learning System. To each, they had their own experiences which include facing a new

environment and having peers of various ages and backgrounds. The informants were presented with a way to reach their goals and aspirations, and they took it even if it meant that they had to walk down an unfamiliar path, as verbalized by Cathy:

Na-uwaw ko kay nagsud nako kay imong mga classmate mga bata. Para nako sa-una kung unsa ako gusto buhaton, gusto gyud ko dayunon, bahala og unsa na ka stress tinud-on jud kay to nako. Sakripisyo gyud bahala na. Naghuman gud nako sa-una og himo og essay magpa-uwahi ko'g pass aron ma one-on-one kung ma'am. Bisan maninda ko, naghuman sa recess tu-a suwat nasad ko. Na-a pay gamay na bata gidala nako sa eskwelahan kay wala paman to kinder ato. [When I first entered class I saw that a lot of my classmates were younger than me; I felt shy. Sometimes I would bring my youngest child to school. Back then, I always thought that whatever I wanted to do, I would make it happen, no matter how stressful it could be. It is indeed a sacrifice. Every time I finish my essays, I always want to be the last one to pass to the teacher because I wanted to have a one-on-one session. I would still make my essays even during work.]

In Cathy's case, she was older than most of her classmates, but she was able to persevere, do her best, balance her work, responsibilities being a mother and studying. Another informant named Olanzapine proceeded and is going through the Alternative Learning System to prove to his previous batchmates in formal school that he is still capable, as he verbalized:

Ganahan lang nako na ipakita nako sa akong mga classmate before, na iprove nako sa ila ba nga I'm not that guy nga bugalbugal lang ang nahibaw-an. [I want to prove to my old classmates that I've improved. I'm not that guy who doesn't take things seriously.]

In enrolling into the Alternative Learning System, each informant has their own driving force that pushes them to strive even through difficult times.

This story also tells us about the discrimination the informants experienced as they went through the ALS program, as verbalized by Cathy:

Usahay manaway sila na kani daw ALS ma-o wala nakagraduate kay mga adik, dili oy kay daghan baya ta og rason sa kinabuhì. Dili bitaw nila i-judge lang ka dayun. Sakit bitaw usahay ingana kay lahi-lahi baya gyud ning storya sa usa ka tawo. [Some people say that if you are in ALS, you are a drug addict. People should not judge a person immediately, because there a lot of reasons why a person enrolls in ALS. It hurts sometimes to be judged easily because every individual has different stories to tell.]

Cathy and a few other informants have mentioned that people do discriminate and judge without thinking

about those who are in the Alternative Learning System. But it is true that everybody has their own experiences in life that have led them into enrolling into the Alternative Learning System, not just based on one unfortunate aspect to generalize the entirety of ALS students.

The Unceasing River. This story narrates about the unending journey of how second chances pave way to new beginnings and new opportunities in life. These are the stories the informants shared when asked about their life experience after the Alternative Learning System. Some had retaken their chance with ALS and thus had deeper understanding and meaning with it. Some are constantly moving to new levels of education and are introduced to new environments in formal schooling. It also narrates the continued stigma they have encountered even after they accomplished the program, as Dong verbalized:

Bugal-bugalan ko nila Kay gikan man ko's ALS, alsa sako daw ba...Kay sa mga bugoy-bugoy daw ba. And ang uban mu-ingun na unsa mana oy mura gali silbi ba gipang look down nila ang mga ALS ba. [They bullied me because I was from ALS. They think ALS students do learn much in school. They say it is for people who are into vices. Others will say that it is unfair that ALS passers will easily proceed without going through formal schooling.]

Even though Dong took the effort to try and continue his education using the Alternative Learning System, he still encountered stigma when going back to formal education.

For those who re-enrolled into ALS they felt that they have changed, as Wilfredo said:

Maka-ingun ko nga na-a gyud change tungod sa ALS. Na-a say motivation. Kay sa-una ALS ko ma-o rato. Comply lang kay comply, bisyo lang kay bisyo. Nakibaw nako sa processo sa ALS. Dili lang pa relax-relax, na makapasar naka. Kinahanglan na na-a gyud leg work sa ALS. [I can say that ALS changed me. When I entered ALS for the first time, I just complied and did the work, then left to do vices. I now know the process of ALS. You can't pass if you don't work hard.]

The Open Field. This story narrates the present life of the informants and how they perceive themselves in the future. They also emphasized the importance of education and how it played a role into where they are today. The informants shared how the ALS program made their life better and gave them a chance and hope for a better future, as shared by Magz:

Ang ALS one step sa akong dream. [Being in ALS is one step towards my dream.]

They were motivated through ALS and hope to even inspire others to continue through education and schooling, like for Dong and Felix:

Sa mga ta-o sad na nakadungog sa akong storya, bisag ingun ini rako gihimo ko nilang inspiration. [To the people who hear my story. I hope they will make my story as their inspiration.]

Even for Wilfredo who is retaking ALS, he has high expectations to himself and for his future, as he verbalized:

Daghan ko ug gusto na plano na muhuman ko ug skwela. Gusto ko na mapareha sa ako papa na mo trabaho sa barko. Ganahan pud ko na magpilot ug mag chef. Pero mas mo focus ko sa karon. Mao na siya na akong gigamit kay one day at a time lang ko. [I want to finish my studies because I have a lot of plans in life. My dream is to be a seaman like my father, I also want to be a pilot or chef. But I'm focusing on the present. I want to take one day at a time.]

You may add other entries as appropriate. Label and arrange the headings logically.

IV. DISCUSSION

The Wanderer's Quandary. The feeling of being stressed can be triggered by events that are predictable and unpredictable, that can make you feel frustrated. Stress can negatively affect the way children pay attention in class, stay on task and are able to move from one activity to another (American Psychological Association, 2011). According to the Philippine Statistics Authority, the Philippines has about 3.8 million out-of-school children and youth (OSCY) in the year 2016. The identified top three reasons among OSCY for not attending school were family problems or marriage (42.3%), financial concern (29.7%) and lack of interest (26.9%). There are a lot of reasons why some people do not finish their studies and drop out from school. In our study, most of our informants have met unfortunate and uncontrollable events in life that affected their ways of living. Three of our informants had financial problems, three were due to lack of interest, and one had a family problem.

The Fork at the end of the Road. Traumatic and difficult events do not necessarily lead to incapacitating problems but also can spark tremendous growth and learning (Kottle, 2013). In the theory about Human Adaptation, humans modify behavior to suit new conditions wherein if people perceive relevant changes in their environment they adapt their behavior to meet the new challenges or to benefit from new changes (Wilde, 1994). Knowing that most Alternative Learning

System students, their reasons for studying varies depending on the previous situation they had, it may be geared towards obtaining stable employment, pursuing financial security, achieving professional ambition and self-satisfaction (Atilano et al., 2016). In our study, the sudden turning point in the lives of the informants had a significant part in their decision to change and seek a new path and for them it's the Alternative Learning System that gave them hope for a new beginning and a bridge to their dreams.

The Path Less Traveled. The Alternative Learning System provides a second chance in schooling to marginalized learners, where they can be able to find a better job and pursue further education. The program gave them an opportunity to try again after failing. Along with the various factors that attribute to enrolling in ALS, the experience is different as well for each student. All students have different needs whether in traditional classroom settings or the centers of Alternative Learning System. Generally speaking, the students in ALS have more complex needs due to their individual situations at home and school. This can be considered true in almost any place in alternative learning setups. Children, teenagers and even adults who have not finished their education grapple with various issues which affect their learning capacities. Cathy stated that she had a little difficulty getting back into the system because it had been a while since she was in school and that she felt ashamed of her age since most of the enrollees were quite younger than her. A stigma created in the society can also be attached to ALS students. Labels such as "bad students" or "problem students" can make student feel judged or dislike which causes resentment and lack of willingness to continue their education (Atilano et al., 2016). Like for one of our informants, Cathy claimed that she was discriminated by her classmate for being too old to be in school and that she had a low capacity to learn. For Doy, he heard from others that you'd be judged by companies if they see you have graduated from ALS. For Wilfredo, he heard that you wouldn't learn much if you were a student in ALS. Indeed, taking the ALS, was like taking a path less traveled. But it does not mean that it cannot lead you to your destination.

The Unceasing River. Filipinos have a deep regard for education, which they view as a primary avenue for upward social and economic mobility. Filipinos internalized the American ideal of democratic society in which individuals could get through attainment of good education (Dolan, 1993). On the other hand, in our society today, if an individual falter from society, they are labelled differently they must also suffer the

repercussions of such social differentiation. People judge what they cannot understand (Goffman, 1963). Since Alternative Learning System differs from the traditional way of obtaining education and the information about the program is poorly disseminated by the public, people oftentimes have misconceptions. Goffman also argued that people judge what they cannot understand. Things that are strange or incomprehensible to individuals are heavily judged and this is how stigmas are developed. In society, majority rules and this is especially occurring when people sway from societal norms. In the case of Doy, he mentioned that if companies look at your educational background and see that one has graduated from ALS, people would think differently compared to seeing that you have graduated from a private school.

The Open Field. Personal purpose is a cradle-to-grave journey. This develops over one's lifetime and as it is

discovered and rediscovered, it becomes a sense of joy with less sense of duty and obligation. As students begin to see the interconnectedness of work and the work of others in the world, it is then that students begin to see the bigger picture that each of us are empowered with purpose (Kopacz, 2009). The ALS program developed their sense of confidence and civic mindedness. They develop a positive outlook in life and they cultivate the passion for education by pursuing further studies. The program gave them a sense of direction and purpose in life (Apao, Dayagbil, & Abao, 2014). The ALS program increased the motivation of learning to these seven informants which in turn, greatly impacted their lives. The informants had also an increase in their coping mechanism to the challenges in their educational pursuit. The values that were identified useful in coping are industry, conscientiousness, and optimism which were gathered (Bantulo, & Guhao, 2016). These characteristics were identified to be present in our informants. In the dreams and aspirations in life of the ALS learners there were three (3) major themes that appeared in the research study of Bantulo and Guhao (2016) where ideas were highly related to Gainful Employment, Sense of Accomplishment, and Progress and Self-improvement. It further reflects the stories of the informants that they wanted to finish studies to gain stable employment, to have a diploma and to pursue continuing education to gain more knowledge and life skills.

V. CONCLUSION

The Alternative Learning System served as the bridge

for many of the informants to a second chance in continuing their educational pursuits. To many, being a student in the Alternative Learning System can be a challenging road to take especially being in this form of education which is not commonly taken by the public. The experiences they have been through when they stopped formal schooling and the feeling of starting anew in ALS cannot be quantified. Despite the difficulties, discrimination and stigma labelled towards most of the informants, they were able to overcome it through their individual goals and were able to persevere in continuing towards their future.

We recommend to the ALS students to express their feelings to their friends, family or anyone they trust to lessen the burden that they feel if any. They should also consider the option to pursue further education. For the public, that they should be more open minded and avoid from stigmatizing ALS students since external factors played as well. For the future researchers, to conduct a study about students who did not complete the ALS program.

Originality Index:	90%
Similarity Index:	10%
Paper ID:	930235048
Grammar:	Cheched

REFERENCES

- American Psychological Association (2011). *The Impact of Stress*. American Psychological Association. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/stress/2011/impac.aspx>
- Apao, L. T., Dayagbil, F. T., & Abao, E. L. (2014). Alternative Learning System Accreditation and Equivalency (ALS A & E) Program. *Quality of Life beyond Poverty*, 2(4), 20-26.
- Atilano, E. B., Desipeda, C. J., Domingo, Z. J., Garbin, S. N. & Omanito, R. A. (2016). Factors influencing the dropout rate in Alternative Learning System Accreditation and Equivalency Program. *The Online Journal of New Horizons in Education*, 6(4), 99-109
- Ballaran, J. (2017, November 26). DepEd vows to strengthen Alternative Learning System. *Inquirer News*. Retrieved from <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/>
- Bantulo, J. S., & Guhao, E. S. (2016). Standpoints of learners of the adult learning system: A phenomenology. *International Journal of Scientific & Engineering Research*, 7(11), 342-362.
- Department of Education (2017, January). ALS FAQ. Retrieved from <http://www.deped.gov.ph/als/faq>
- Department of Education (2017, July). *DepEd rolls out ALS-K to 12 Basic Education*. Retrieved from: <http://www.deped.gov.ph>
- Dolan, R. E. (1993). *Education. Philippines: A Country Study*. Washington: GPO for the library of Congress, 1991.
- Doyle, M., & Smith, M. K. (2013). Jean-Jacques Rousseau on Education. Retrieved from <http://www.infed.org/thinkers/et-rous.htm>
- Goffman, E. (1963). *Stigma*. London: Penguin.
- Kopacz, J. R. (2009, April). *The Value of Alternative Education to Meet the Needs of At-Risk Students*. (Unpublished thesis). University of Wisconsin-Stout, Menomine, Wisconsin, U.S.A.
- Kottle, J. A. (2013, July). *What Really Leads People's Lives?* Psychology Today. Retrieved from <http://psychologytoday.com>
- Labov, W., & Waletzky, J. (1967). Narrative analysis: Oral versions of personal experience. In J. Helm (Ed.), *Essays on the verbal and visual arts* (pp. 12-44). Seattle: University of Washington Press.

- Mullen, P. R., & Lambie, G. W. (n.d.) School counseling in disciplinary alternative education programs. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1034763.pdf>
- Philippine Statistics Authority (2015, April 20). *Out-of-School Children and Youth in the Philippines*. Retrieved from <https://psa.gov.ph/content/out-school-children-andyouth-philippines-results-2013-functional-literacy-education>
- Polit, D. & Beck, C. (2012). *Nursing research: Generating and assessing evidence for nursing practice* (9th ed.). China: Lippincott William & Wilkins.
- Sanchez, E. (n.d.). Non-Formal Education Among Out-of-School-Youth: Case Studies of Service Providers of the Philippines Alternative Learning System (Unpublished master's thesis).
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization: UNESCO. (2015). Philippine Education for All 2015: Implementation and Challenges. Retrieved from http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/Philippines/Philippines_EFA_MDA.pdf
- Wilde, G. J. S. (1994). Risk homeostasis theory: An overview. *Injury Prevention*, 4(2), 89–91
-

AUTHORS



Tiffany Nadine S. Lim was born on January 1997, in Illinois, USA. She graduated from Velez College with a degree in Bachelor of Science in Nursing, in 2018. She conducted her first research study with three colleagues, namely, “Bridges of Hope: The Stories of those who have gone through the Alternative Learning System.” She hopes to further contribute to evidence based practice and nursing related research.

The third paragraph begins with the author’s title and last name (e.g., Dr. Smith, Prof. Jones, Mr. Kajor, Ms. Hunter). List any memberships in professional societies. Finally, list any awards and work for committees and publications. If a photograph is provided, the biography will be indented around it. The photograph is placed at the top left of the biography. Personal hobbies will be deleted from the biography.



Clarisse Mae L. Monte de Ramos was born in Sogod Southern Leyte on May 31, 1997. She had taken her elementary education in Gakat Elementary School, Libagon, Southern Leyte and high school education in Saint Joseph College Maasin City, Southern Leyte. She is graduate of Bachelor of Science in Nursing at Velez College, Cebu City, Philippines. She had conducted a research entitled “Bridges of Hope: The Stories of those who have gone through the Alternative Learning System,” last 2017-2018.



Patricia Mae Gabaca from Pit-os, Cebu City, Philippines was born in Cebu City on November 19, 1996. She had her primary education in Pulangbato Elementary School at Pulangbato, Cebu City and secondary education in Talamban National High School (Science Class) at Talamban, Cebu City. She took the Philippine Educational Placement Test held in Zapatera, Cebu City and accelerated from second year high school to College level. Currently graduated Bachelor of Science in Nursing at Velez College located in F.Ramos St., Cebu City, Philippines.

This is her first published research article about “Bridges of Hope: The Stories of those who have gone through the Alternative Learning System” together with her colleagues, this research was inspired by her sister who has also gone through Alternative Learning System. She had also a research paper about Meningitis inspired by her classmate in high school who died from the disease. She started her writing career in 2010 and writes feature articles in a variety of styles and covers a range of topics. She has a passion in the field of research and wants to venture her life in the pursuit of a greater knowledge and discovery that could be useful in our society.



Johnny J. Yao Jr. obtained his degree of Bachelor of Science in Nursing at Velez College, Cebu City in 2009 where he graduated as cum laude. After passing the Philippine Nursing Licensure Exam, he volunteered as a nurse at the Philippine National Police Hospital Region 7 for one year. At the same time, he pursued his Masters in Nursing with a specialization in medical-surgical nursing at Cebu Normal University (CNU) and graduated in 2011. He was invited to be part of the faculty of the College of Nursing at Velez College in 2010. He supervised and mentored students during their clinical rotations in medical-surgical, pediatric, and community health nursing areas. As a professor, he teaches medical-surgical nursing, health assessment, and research. In the year 2013, he graduated with a degree of Doctor of Management major in health care management at the University of the Visayas (UV) and was awarded excellence in research for his dissertation. Dr. Yao is also certified by the Emergency Care and Safety Institute (ECSI) as a Basic Life Support (BLS) Instructor. He is a visiting graduate school professor in UV and CNU. Dr. Yao is currently the president of the Velez Nurses Alumni Association. As of the time of writing, he is the research director of Velez College.

